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Government Organization

The County is governed by the provisions of its Charter. The Charter, adopted in 1973, became effective January 1, 1976. In November of 1993, Albany County adopted a new County Charter. The current County Charter differs from the previous Charter primarily in the balance of power between the Executive and Legislative branches of government. The new Charter shifted most of the administrative and day-to-day activities to the Executive branch. Further, it created a Human Resources Department and restructured the internal reporting hierarchy. Under the Charter, the County is a home rule municipality and functions consistently with those provisions of the State Constitution and laws uniformly applicable to all New York municipalities.

The **Legislature** is the governing body of the County. A chairman, selected by the legislators every two years, is the presiding officer. Legislators are elected from each of the 39 districts within the County every four years or by special election in the event of a vacancy. The Legislature has the power to establish rules and procedures for itself, adopt local laws, levy taxes and other revenue measures, adopt budgets and approve all policies relevant to County government. Meetings of the Legislature are held on a monthly basis and are open to the public.

The **County Executive** is elected in the general election to a four-year term concurrent with that of the Legislature, without restriction as to the number of terms, and is charged with supervision of County government, subject to the provisions of the Charter. The Executive reports annually to the Legislature on the activities of all administrative units, recommends an annual budget, recommends for appointment the heads of departments and administrative units of government and executes contracts. The financial affairs of the County are administered by two officers: the Commissioner of Management and Budget and the Comptroller. The Commissioner of Management and Budget, who is appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the Legislature, assists the Executive in the preparation of the operating and capital budgets and in the study of administrative efficiency and economy, collects taxes and other revenues, and invests County funds.

The **Comptroller** is elected in the general election to a four-year term concurrent with that of the Legislature, without restriction as to the number of terms, and is the chief fiscal officer of the County. Under the Comptroller's direction, the Department of Audit and Control obtains and audits all records relating to the use or deposit of County funds and submits annual reports to the Legislature. The Comptroller recommends and the Legislature authorizes the issuance of County debt.

The County's **fiscal year** for budget and accounting purposes is January 1st to December 31st. Its final budget, approved by the Executive and authorized by the Legislature, must make adequate provision for the servicing of debt and must not provide for an excess of expenditures over anticipated revenues. Included as part of each budget is a five-year capital improvement program. This plan is prepared by the County Executive and approved by the Legislature.

There are a total of **twenty County administrative departments**-Aging; Civil Service; Children, Youth and Families; Consumer Affairs; Economic Development; Conservation and Planning; Elections; General Services; Health; Human Resources; Law; Management and Budget; Mental Health; Probation; Public Defender; Public Works; Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center; Residential Health Care Facilities; Social Services and the Veterans Bureau. The District Attorney, County Clerk, Sheriff, Comptroller and four County Coroners are elected by general election. Candidates for other positions are proposed by the County Executive and appointed by the Legislature with the exception of the Board of Election Commissioners who are appointed solely by the Legislature.

The information presented in this "About Us" section is a brief description of the County, its economy, governmental organization, indebtedness and financial practices.

Certain information may require economic analysis in order to assess the importance of the facts and figures presented.

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